

Sturgis, Dinah.

The Kindergarten for the Blind
(Boston, Mass.)



AMERICAN FOUNDATION
FOR THE BLIND INC.

THE KINDERGARTEN

FOR THE

BLIND

Boston Massachusetts.

BY

DINAH STURGIS

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THE KINDERGARTEN FOR THE BLIND.

By Dinah Sturgis.

"Children are God's apostles, day by day
Sent forth to preach of
love, and hope, and
peace."



"LITTLE ELIZABETH,"
THE CHRISTMAS MORN-
ING AFTER HER
ARRIVAL.

THESE words of Lowell, breathing his fine appreciation of the spirit of childhood, might well be blazoned over the entrance to the Kindergarten for the Blind in Jamaica Plain, near Boston. Surely they are writ deeper than ever before on the heart of every one who visits the school; and they echo with more than the

poet's eloquence in the life of each sightless little one who comes under the ministrations of the tender but wise and just dispensers of this beautiful charity which helps the blind children now so that by and by they can help themselves.

New England's Kindergarten for the Blind is unique in the world. Its actual accomplishments are already of such definite and great value that there is not only cause for congratulation and rejoicing among its directors, whose theories are being supported by practical results, but

also on the part of the liberal public, whose contributions have built and equipped so valuable an institution.

Thanks to her Kindergarten for the Blind, in addition to her other schools for the sightless, America now leads the world in the education of the blind. She leads not because she takes good care of all her indigent blind wards during school years. She is more than an indulgent foster-mother. Her education of the blind is designed not merely to take care of blind boys and girls while they are children, but aims to return them to the community self-respecting and self-supporting members. In this respect, however, other countries keep pace with us, indeed have taught us much that we are now putting into practice. It is the quality and not the quantity of her education for the blind which gives America her prominence. Europe leads in the application of industrial education for the blind. Our greater use of machinery has prevented our having the market for the handiwork of the blind which Europe has had in the past and which still exists in large measure. Let us mention a single example. One of the most important industries for the blind in Europe is basket-making by hand. In America the machine-made box industry has swept away this field for



"A WONDERFULLY FASCINATING GROUP."

wage-earning employment for the blind. The amount of machine labor in this country directed by seeing eyes reduces to a minimum the possibility of blind people here earning a living by their hands.

But the leading American educators among the blind refuse to concede that blindness cuts the nerve of remunerative work even in an age of labor-saving machinery. They insist that blindness should not debar any one from being a productive member of the community; and they have been quick to recognize the fact that if the blind cannot make a living by their hands, they must do so with their brains. The education which

graduates merely a dexterous machine, poor as this kind of education always was, is no longer available for the American blind boy or girl who is to become a helpful member of society instead of a charge upon it. The education which makes of a child a mere repository of the ideas of others, a more or less clever parrot, is scarcely better. The future welfare of the blind depends upon the development of their own mental faculties, and upon the applicability of their ideas to the needs of civilization. The individuality of the blind child is his most precious possession. The teaching which develops this is the best teaching; and



"THE JOYOUS LITTLE PEOPLE AT THEIR KNITTING."

this is the line along which the teachers of the blind in this country are progressing.

The value of the Kindergarten for the Blind in this plan of education can hardly be overestimated. More than fifty per cent of all the blind in the world were born with their eyesight, and lost it largely through the ignorance or carelessness of their guardians. The blindness of many more is attributable to preventable prenatal influences. The majority of the little ones in either case thus afflicted by the gross neglect or ignorance of their natural guardians are born into homes of extreme poverty and squalor.

Most of the blind children who must be educated, if at all, at the expense of the public are born, says an authority, "in the ways of ignorance and depravity, in the folds of misery and vice, in an environment where they are kicked, cuffed and driven about, where the bread that they eat, the air that they breathe, and the talk that they hear are all either injurious to their health or poisonous to their character." To save these future men and women from being buried in the depths of helplessness, or becoming rotten in the marshes of abuse or the morasses of indulgence, they need to be speedily removed from their surroundings and placed under the most genial influences and cultivation, where such seeds as there are of good qualities or talents may be vivified and helped to germinate and grow.

That admirable school, the Perkins Institution for the Blind, receives children at the age of nine years. Until the Kindergarten for the Blind was opened there was no place where blind children between the ages of five and nine, those most susceptible years,



"HARDLY TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM
A SEEING CHILD."

could receive instruction unless their parents were able to provide private teachers for them. Dr. Howe was greatly impressed with the urgency of rescuing little blind waifs at the earliest possible age from their positively evil influences or negatively harmful lives of inertia and idleness. For several years he managed to receive a limited number of children of the kindergarten age into the Perkins Institution; but in

1882 the kindergarten class had to be given up, not only because the growing advanced departments of the school required all the available room in the school, but also because it was deemed inadvisable longer to have the very little blind children associated more or less intimately, as they had to be under the circumstances, with the older scholars.

It is unnecessary to tell in detail the story of the establishment of the Kindergarten for the Blind, the first in the world. Interesting as this story is, it is



MISS ROESKE'S ORCHESTRA.

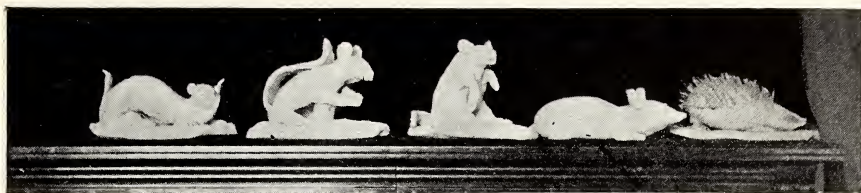


THE KINDERGARTEN FAMILY.

the spirit of the Kindergarten in operation, and not the story of its foundation, which will appeal most to most readers. All who are acquainted with the facts think of the Kindergarten as a monument to the splendid soul of Mr. Michael Anagnos, Dr. Howe's son-in-law, for years associated with him at the Perkins Institution, and his successor there, where he is the present head of the school. Mr. Anagnos's love for his work among the blind amounts to a passion. He is singularly self-effacing in temperament, yet his insight is so keen, his great heart so tender, his enthusiasm for the possibilities of human development so great, his wiser judgment and more sensitive culture discerning something worth mining for where others would see only hopelessness, that he inspires all about him.

The Kindergarten speaks for itself in its substantial and handsome yet simple home in Jamaica Plain, at the corner of Day and Perkins Streets, the street-cars passing the door. It was in 1882, at the annual meeting of the Perkins Institution

in Tremont Temple, that the Rev. Edward A. Horton made an impassioned appeal to the audience to help provide a kindergarten for the little sightless children, which should raise them from a position of sloth and torpor into one of comfort and diligence. Mr. Anagnos kept before the public appeals which were their own emphasis, praying for the assistance of generous people; and the cause needed only direction in order to plead its own mission. On the nineteenth of April, 1887, the first building of the Kindergarten was dedicated; and a notable company it was which sanctified the ceremony, including the late Bishop Brooks, Dr. Samuel Eliot, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, the mother of Mrs. Anagnos, whose last words were, "Take care of the little blind children;" the late Dr. Peabody, the Rev. Brooke Herford, Dr. Bartol and Laura Bridgman, deaf, dumb and blind, whom Dr. Howe had led from a darkness worse than death into the light of a sentient human being. One of the most impressive moments in the ex-



ANIMALS MODELLED IN CLAY BY THE CHILDREN.

ercises was that when Laura Bridgman stood and made mutely with her fingers the appeal that was translated audibly for financial means to bring light and joy into the lives of the blind children.

In the seven years which have elapsed since the dedication of the first building, a second spacious dwelling has been erected, making it possible to have one school for the girls and another for the boys. There is also a third building, designed to be a portion of the main building when completed, which now includes a gymnasium and a hall.

The need to argue the value of such an institution has passed away with the enlightenment of public opinion as to the inestimable worth of the great Froebel's

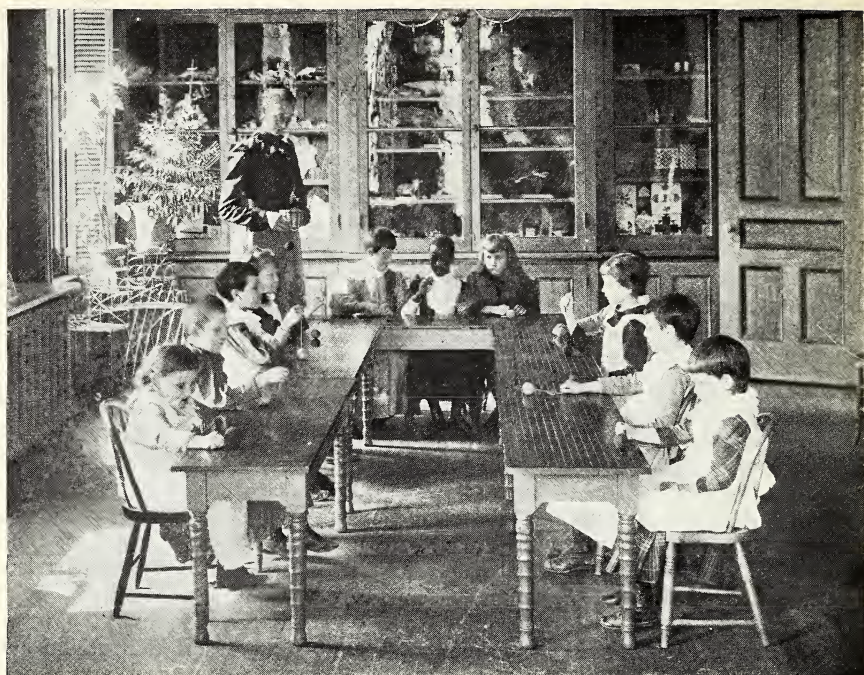
gift to childhood and through it to the world. But though a large sum of money has been given for the Kindergarten, it is not yet free from debt; the sum available for current expenses is not so large as it should be in order not to cramp the possibilities of the school; and although to-day there are seventy children in the school, which during its first year had accommodations for but seventeen, there are yet a number of children waiting for admission, who are barred out by lack of means to provide for them.

A visit to the Kindergarten is worth more than all description. The gallery of living pictures at the Kindergarten, especially if studied against the background of their previous dreary history



THE MORNING TALK.

WILLIE ROBIN IN THE CENTRE OF THE GROUP.



THE LESSON IN THE FIRST GIFT.

WILLIE ROBIN IS AT THE END TABLE ON THE RIGHT.



THE LESSON IN THE SECOND GIFT.

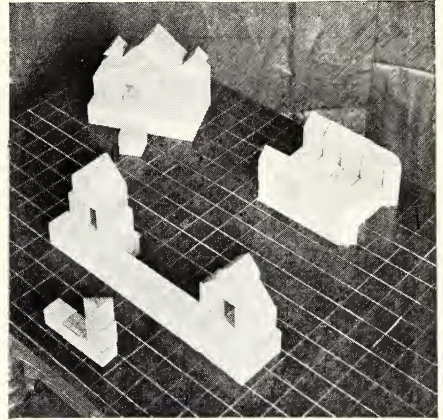
and their present joyous experiences, is one of the most moving panoramas that ever touched the heart.

It does more: it touches the head; and the grateful sympathy which the visitor feels for the accruing good to the beneficiaries of the Kindergarten is coupled with a sense of the wisdom of the social economy which manifests itself in the provisions here being made, not only for the best good of the children, but for the best good as well of the country in which they live and the world in which they are factors.

Blind children between the ages of five and nine from all over New England are eligible for admission to the school. Richter says that children are "nearest the throne of glory." If it were not so, it could not be possible so quickly to win them from the contamination of debasing influences. From the hideous mental sketch of the infancy of the blind children, dwarfing and debasing as so many of their babyhood lives were, it is a revelation to look in upon the family of sweet and happy little folk, whether spirituelle or chubby, in their prettiest and sunshiniest of surroundings at the Kindergarten, where they are watched over and guided by a band of "earthly saints," as some one has called the presiding matron, Miss Isabel Greeley, and her corps of teachers and assistants.

Pathetic a company of sightless children certainly is; but children who are

deprived of their sight are particularly sensitive through their other faculties, as soon and as far as their surroundings furnish scope for the development of the senses they retain. Far from being a sorrowful sight, the Kindergarten children



RAILWAY DEPOT, ENGINE AND HOUSES.

are a wonderfully fascinating group of little people, whom it is a delight to watch and to make friends with. The visitor forgets to grieve for their deprivation in delight over the graceful little bodies and dexterous little hands, the exquisitely sensitive spirit behind the mobile faces showing in their every motion. They are children, every one, and not prodigies, save as all children are prodigies if they come under the right influences.



OBJECTS MADE BY THE CHILDREN.

Wrentham
 August. 28
 Dear Mrs Davidson.
 Bows have
 Two horns. They
 have big ears -
 bows have long
 tails They have
 two eyes and one
 mouth and hoofs
 There are big cabbages
 cucumbers rhubarb
 squashes tall corn
 and beans in the
 garden.
 With love and
 a kiss from
 Tom
 Goodbye Bow.

TOM'S FIRST UNAIDED ATTEMPT AT A LETTER.*

One of the teachers overheard a group of boys who were discussing the various members of the household and giving the teachers titles evidently corresponding to their ideas of their positions. Miss Greeley was "the King," Miss Vose, "the Queen," another "the Queen of Song," etc.; until they gave one the title of "old maid." As the teachers were rather curious to know what might be

*Tom's sense of humor shows itself in unexpected ways. At one time he interchanged the teachers' names. Miss Greeley became "Miss Brown," and Miss Brown "Miss Greeley;" Mrs. Davidson rejoiced in the name of "Tom," while that youth himself absolutely refused to answer to any name but that of "Mrs. Davidson."

A little unpleasantness with one of the teachers caused him after a time to drop this idea and adopt another equally strange. He called each after some animal: horse, cow, dog, cat and toad were among the names lovingly bestowed by the ingenious Tom. Mrs. Davidson being named "cow," would, of course, be glad to know something of that animal; hence the purport of the letter.

their idea of this character, one of them made occasion to bring it into the conversation a few days later and asked one of the boys what an old maid was. "Well," he said, "I think it is a pet animal *that has been kept a very long time.*" In the class one day, as the girls were examining the porcupine, one asked whether it was green. The teacher said, "Why do you think it is green, Amy?" "Because it is a *pine*," was the quick reply of the sightless little one. One boy prays, "God bless me and you too. Amen," — and pops into bed well satisfied. Another, in place of "for thine is the kingdom, the power," etc., says, "for thine is the parlor," — the parlor being an ideal place to him; and for "deliver us from evil," "deliver us from Mabel," — the name of one of the pupils. A little four-year-old on his way to Boston and the Kindergarten, when asked "where he was going," said, "To Kingdom Come." One returned

from home with a paper bag full of crickets, which he let loose in his room and proposed to take care of them through the winter, and wept bitterly at losing them.

The children have some time every day to choose their own employments, and it is noticeable how the kindergarten games help the free play, turning it into the best channels. They play the grocery man, the postman, electric and steam cars, "wolf," "Bluebeard." Some children show inventive skill, and while one boy makes designs of houses, trees, fences, etc., others do more imitative things. One girl, a real mimic, has singing classes and gives lessons to real and imaginary pupils.

One boy with old copper wires, art jars, and inverted ink bottles, started up a battery, and played "electricity" for days, his room being crossed and recrossed with wires, and the bottles inverted to represent the arc light. This boy was fascinated with the whole subject, and could intelligently describe the process of lighting and of the trolley system in the electric cars.

The Kindergarten babies have their good days and their not-so-good days,

porarily afflicted. Many of the children could hardly be distinguished from seeing children unless attention were closely directed to them. They go about the cheery home and their roomiest of play-steads with a freedom from apparent effort to make their way safely which is really wonderful to the uninitiated. All kindergarten training seems a beautiful idyl; its work is all play, and its play is an unending discipline of mind and body, tempered with a reverence for the limitations and rights of the delicate and impressionable baby body and mind. For the blind it is an especially sympathetic training.

Froebel's doctrine never loses sight of the truth that man aiming at perfection must not only know, but must produce; — not only think, but do. Mr. Anagnos is a firm believer in the unerring vision of Froebel, that "saint of childhood," who pointed out so clearly that the capacity of man for work must be fostered in early life side by side with the faculty for observation and comprehension, before the memory is burdened with words and symbols.



DARKNESS.

TOM STRINGER THE DAY HE ARRIVED, SCARCELY ABLE TO WALK AND TOTALLY HELPLESS ALTHOUGH NEARLY SIX YEARS OF AGE.

and the flower-like, almost ethereal quality of one nature often comes into odd contrast with the wild, weed-like disposition of another. But the amenability of the most pugnacious or stubborn child to the generous discipline of the school and home life in the Kindergarten is a tribute to the patient and far-seeing policy of the instruction, and more than all to the inherent possibilities in the child nature.

It is rarely the case that there is present an unsightly disease or deformity of the eyes. Where this is the case, the eyes are mercifully shaded from the visitors' view, as in the case of any one tem-



LIGHT.

THE TOM STRINGER OF TO-DAY.

The few years that the Kindergarten for the Blind has been open have already disclosed the advantages to the children in its keeping, in their increased tractability and susceptibility. The class of about a dozen boys and a dozen girls entering the Perkins Institution at the

keenness of hearing, thanks to the musical instruction in the Kindergarten, which trains the ear to wonderful sensibility, as any one can testify who has ever heard the children name the musical chords struck at random by their devoted music teacher, herself a blind woman. Another advantage experienced by the blind child taught in the Kindergarten is the increased facility in reading with his fingers, thanks to the development of the sense of touch by the garden games and lessons.

Mr. Anagnos, in talking with the writer, explained how the sense of touch not only acts but reacts upon the brain, in a way very different from what is true of the senses of sight and hearing. Herein is the special value of manual training. The training of the hands develops the brain, promoting the superior mental development to which the future welfare of the self-supporting blind must in large measure be due. An important step in the development of the children in the Kindergarten has been taken within the past two years by the introduction in the primary grade of a simple

course of studies in manual training, especially sloyd. These exercises for the tiny fingers are purely educational; but to see the joyous little people at their knitting and needlework, the tasks seem only such as the Brownies might set for their frolics, so delighted are the children with their trophies of that wonderful Finland system of teaching observation and inventiveness.

The temptation is to dwell upon the



FROM A PHOTO TAKEN THREE YEARS AGO.

THE FOUR BLIND MUTES.

HELEN KELLAR.

WILLIE ELIZABETH ROBIN.

EDITH THOMAS.

TOMMY STRINGER.

beginning of the autumn school term, the members of which have had the complete kindergarten training, shows a definite advance along various lines over that possible for these children to have attained had the early instruction been wanting. The standard of scholarship for the class last going into the higher school is higher than that reached by scholars in previous years. One advantage enjoyed by these scholars is greater

instruction at the Kindergarten, instruction which is based upon the sociological needs of the world, as well as upon the individual needs of each child. But any sketch of the Kindergarten would be unsympathetic and incomplete that extolled the technical training and slighted the home life of the institution, which radiates an atmosphere no less enjoyable to the visitor than blessed for all the little ones who are constantly within its influence. The children are looked upon neither as an ill or well assorted number of nature's failures, nor as a collection of one division of those under a special ban of Divine Providence, as are the inmates of so many "homes" and institutions. The Kindergarten family of children are regarded as if they were "just like other children," as so many visitors delightedly say of them, but also as those to whom tender human sympathy has made it possible to reach out a helping hand, when fate seemed determined to deny it to them. The children are capable of enjoying and do enjoy the pleasures and privileges of happy childhood with the same zest as seeing children. Deprived of their sight, they enjoy the more keenly through their other senses.

That any blind child should be deprived of the manifold advantages of such a home by reason of the lack of money to enlarge its boundaries, seems heartless. The Kindergarten for the Blind is the first step in the direction of making useful members of society of those who but for its ministrations might remain so long unaided that the best possibilities of their lives would be permanently blunted or destroyed. "The difference between the neglected and the educated sightless child," says Mr.



MARTHA.

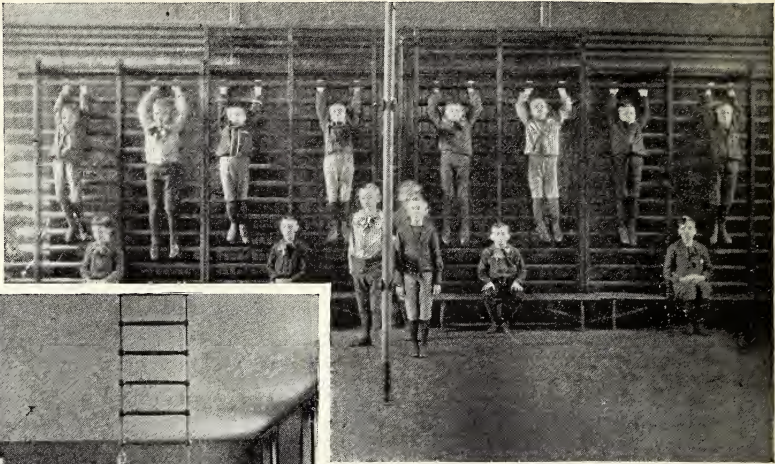


READING.

Anagnos, "is almost incredibly great. While the former wends his way through life like an unkempt creature, the latter, gladdened by the genial warmth of knowledge and fitted for the discharge of duty and for general usefulness, takes his position as a member of the human family, contributes his share to the common weal, and enjoys the privileges and fulfils the obligation of citizenship, thus forming an integral part of society."

The educational value of such an institution is not expended wholly upon the children under its sheltering wings. There is a reflex influence upon all who come within the pale of the Kindergarten which makes for a deepening of the noblest sentiment, a heightening of aspiration to comprehend more fully the Divine Power revealed through His children, often through the humblest of them.

The remarkable progress toward the ends to which the Kindergarten for the Blind offers as yet a unique means is shown but in part through its training of very young children. The world marvelled over what Dr. Howe was able to accomplish in teaching Laura Bridgman; yet there are now four Laura Bridgmans



IN THE GYMNASIUM.



who have been gathered into the haven of the parent institution in South Boston and into the Kindergarten. Dumbness happily may now be stricken from the description of these children, for each one of the four is learning to speak; and though neither will ever hear a sound or see a ray of light, yet the soul of each child is unfolding within its darkened temple in a way that seems to place the education which is opening the way to this development among the wonders of the world.

There are many deaf, dumb and blind children in the world. There are several in Russia. There they are considered to be beyond aid. In Norway and Sweden there are as many as there are in the United States altogether, the extreme climate and the isolation of the people seeming to conspire toward the direful result of multiplying these pitiful cases of

children who cannot hear, who cannot speak because they cannot hear and so do not learn the sounds by which we express our thoughts, and who cannot see. A Swedish lady who spent several months in this country, for part of which time she was the guest of Mr. Anagnos, has collected in Sweden five of the blind and deaf-mutes there, and is teaching them. The first deaf and dumb child to be taught to speak was a little girl in Norway; and it is interesting to recall that in 1844, at the time when Horace Mann, to whom Boston owes her admirable school for deaf-mutes, went to Europe on his wedding tour, he brought home the first inspiration for teaching articulation to deaf-mutes. Oddly enough Dr. Howe also upon his wedding journey went to Europe at this same time, and part of the inspiration of the studies then of these two men, who were close friends, appeared in the after training of Laura Bridgman. But the art was young in those days, and Laura Bridgman's accomplishments, wonderful as they were for her day and generation, pale into the background of beginnings, although they lose nothing of the significance of a notable commencement, beside what is being accomplished with deaf, dumb and blind children in Boston to-day.

Helen Kellar, whose name and fame are now world-wide, is the oldest of the children who must be counted the chief

glory of the teaching being perfected at the Kindergarten for the Blind. Helen, who is sixteen years old, and several years ago entered the main school at South Boston, was born fortunately into a family whose circumstances from the first made it possible for her to have the constant attendance of a private teacher who had been trained in the Perkins Institution. Hence her development, thanks also to her own exceptionally gifted nature, might have been equally great with the parent school alone assisting. But to the Kindergarten itself belongs the unlimited credit of having brought light where there was only darkness and seemingly hopeless silence, into the lives of Willie Elizabeth Robin, Edith Thomas and Tommy Stringer.

Local readers are familiar with the main facts in the lives of these children and of the wonders of the art which is unlocking their imprisoned lives despite their terrible deprivation of faculties. This even ceases to seem terrible in the light of the marvels which the children themselves are. "The change which has taken place in little Tommy Stringer since his admission to the Kindergarten," says the last report, "is truly marvelous." Three years ago he was brought to the Kindergarten from a Pittsburg hospital, whence he was about to be sent to the almshouse, being but a poor orphan. He could barely walk, and if left to himself would creep, — a mere mass of vital clay, — feeble, helpless, inert, apparently without much intelligence, and devoid as it would seem of most of the ordinary impulses of young creatures. He knew nothing but to make a crying noise if thwarted in his desire to hold something which he wanted. The same sound was his only means of making known his hunger or thirst. This was his condition in the spring of 1891, when he was admitted to the Kindergarten. "Through the parental care and special training"—again quoting the report—"which he has received under the roof of the infant institution, he has been transformed into a fine boy, instinct with life and spirit, active and sprightly,

abounding in good nature, and not wanting either in obstinacy or in mischievous propensities. . . . He was eminently successful in some deeds of mischief, such as throwing small utensils out of the pantry window, putting soap down the pump, and so on. . . . He has a sense of humor and appreciates fun even when it is at his own expense. The question, 'What is your name?' having occurred in the reading lesson, Tom's teacher had said to him, 'And what is your name?' Tom was naughty about replying, but finally, after having to stand on a chair a short time, he consented to say: 'Tom.' The next day when his book was opened for a new lesson, he turned the leaf back to



the old one, found the line, 'What is your name?' — shouted 'Tom!' at the top of his voice, made a motion in the direction of the chair, smiled as much as to say, 'What a fuss I made over nothing!' and then settled himself down for the new reading." Tommy has a vocabulary of many hundred words, can articulate words and speak several short sentences, reads by touch, can carry on a conversation about anything he knows about, which, printed, makes a little "composition"

that would do credit to any child of his age. He will spell into his teacher's hand the request to be excused from the table when he has finished eating, and folds his napkin neatly before he gets down from his chair. He is as full of mischief as ever any live boy was, but has a sweet disposition and an affectionate one; plays with all the abandon of any child, and is sufficiently master of the situation to be able to carry letters from the school to the corner, where he puts them into the letter-box unaided. He learns quickly anything which he takes an interest in; and all in all, though he is making his way against appalling odds, yet, thanks to the merciful intervention of the Kindergarten, where he will remain if the necessary funds are forthcoming, his salvation is visible. His support has been thus far subscribed by generous friends in and about Boston, a large sum having come through the efforts of Helen



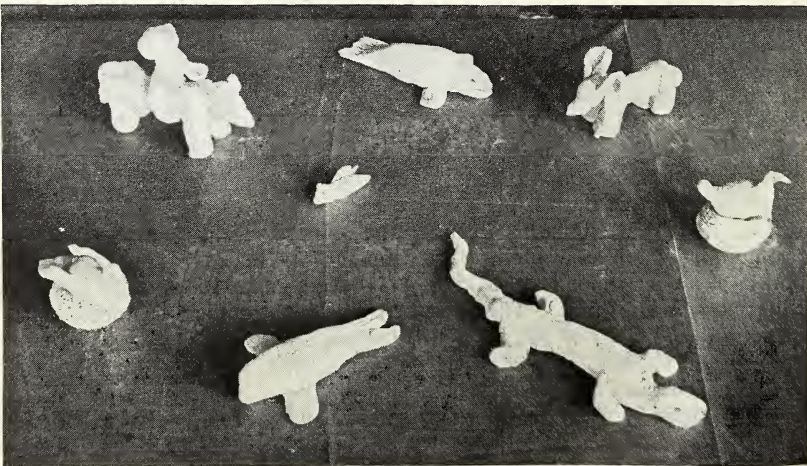
ISABEL GREELEY.

Kellar, upon whose loving heart Tommy's friendless condition has rested very heavily. The cost of caring for such a child is of course great even at its lowest terms, since he must have a special teacher and constant care.

Edith Thomas, who in common with the other three children was born with all her faculties, and then lost sight and hearing through illness, is nearly of Helen's age, and their friend-

ship is singularly interesting, although they meet but seldom.

Willie Robin, who comes to the Kindergarten all the way from Texas, like Helen, is a wonderfully interesting child. Helen has been called a genius by every one who has ever come within the spell of her unusually brilliant child mind; but her genius is the reflected genius of others. She has an extraordinarily tenacious memory and an uncommon quickness of perception. She is an omnivo-



WORK DONE BY THE CHILDREN IN CLAY.

THE OBJECT IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER IS AN EQUESTRIAN GEORGE WASHINGTON.

rous reader, with a nice sense of the comparative merit of what she reads. She is not original, however, in her mental make-up. Her head is filled with ideas, but they are the ideas of other people. In fine, Helen imitates. Willie is a creator. In her education, the fact that there is such a thing as teaching a child too much has been ever kept in view. She has been encouraged to think her own thoughts part of the time instead of perpetually dwelling upon the beautiful thoughts of others. One who has seen much of her says: "Willie is a delightful piece of humanity, — a materialized sunbeam, if ever there was one."

None but those who have been in daily association with these wonderful children can have any just estimate of them or their wonder-working tuition. Happily very full reports are made from day to day by their individual teachers; and from these reports and the recorded talks and letters of the children themselves some idea may be formed even by outsiders, of the great victory advanced education is winning with tremendous odds against it.

If one thinks for a moment of the horrible problem presented in suddenly losing, while in the height of the powers of manhood or womanhood, the ability to see, to hear or to speak, the contingency is appalling. But one would recover equilibrium and pick up the knotted and twisted threads of life again, because the mind would come to the rescue of the afflicted body. The problem which instructors of blind deaf-mutes have to solve is that of developing a mind in an infant who can hear nothing and see nothing, who knows nothing to say nor how to say it if it did. Tremendous as the problem is for the principals, the process is one of never-ending fascination for all who meet the wonderful quartet made up of Helen, Edith, Willie and Tommy, and contrast their likeness to all brightly individual children with the mental blank which the children were a few years ago when compared with other babies who had speech, ears to hear, and eyes to see.

"How did you ever begin?" The teachers who have been the special attendants and instructors of the quartet are bombarded with this question. The reply might well be that each one began with her whole heart and soul, and had never ceased employing them. Stripped of the infinite patience, the exquisite tact and the true kindergartner's real love for her work, which makes it to her a blessed privilege, a teacher's first steps with a blind deaf-mute are timed somewhat to suit the temperament of the child, yet based upon a well-defined system.



THE MUSIC-ROOM.

When Willie Robin entered the Kindergarten, she was six and a half years old, and could make known her wants only by signs. She became interested in the children at once, singled out one little blind girl as her companion, and followed her everywhere. No direct teaching was attempted at first, the little girl being allowed to run about, to become acquainted with the members of the household and familiar with the buildings and her surroundings in all their details. Meanwhile her teacher was studying her and trying to win her affection. Her love of order was noticeable, and it was soon apparent that an appeal

to her understanding was more effective than the use of any force. Her bath afforded an early illustration of this. Having no mutual language, her teacher could not explain her wishes before undertaking to give Willie her first bath. The child was very strong, and resisted with all her might, so that her teacher, Miss Thayer, required considerable help before she succeeded in bringing her within reasonable control. The next time Miss Thayer began by taking her charge into the bath-room, showing her the water and allowing her to see (with her hands) that one of her companions was undressing. Then Willie understood what was expected, and without the slightest hesitation began to prepare for the bath, which she really enjoyed. One day she became interested in a set of alphabet blocks and in tracing the raised letters upon their sides; so her teacher sat down beside her and made in the manual alphabet the same letter which the child was examining on the block, — and soon Willie tried to imitate her in making the letters.

A week after her arrival at the Kinder-



"I'M NOT WILLIE
O'BRIEN, I'M WILLIE
SUNSHINE."

garten Willie's lessons began. Three words were selected, — *fan*, *hat* and *ring*, — and provided with the corresponding objects. Miss Thayer seated herself beside her little pupil, and began work in real earnest. She gave Willie a small fan, allowed her to examine it and use it, then made the letters, f-a-n, in the child's hand. She gave her another fan, again spelling the word; and after showing her several fans of different styles, spelling the word each time, she took a hat, and repeated the lesson with that object. After a little while Willie grew mischievous and hid in her apron the hand in which the teacher had spelled the words to her. In the

gymnastic class she did not in the least understand the exercises, and was somewhat troublesome; but when in the afternoon she received her first lesson in kindergarten occupations, she did much better. With the help of her teacher she wove a mat with splints, and then began to string alternately a ball and a cube. This she liked so much that she was unwilling to leave it when the bell rang for recess. The lessons upon the words *fan*,

hat and *ring* were repeated day after day, and she was taught to fashion the articles with paper and with clay. Four days after the first lesson, her teacher gave her a lump of clay, spelled *hat* in her hand, and by signs indicated that she wished Willie to make one. She repeated the spelling several times, and then left the child to herself, and awaited the result. To her surprise and delight, her little pupil produced a hat. Yet she could not be sure that it was not by a happy accident that the child had hit upon the right object. She wished to test her. The day before, the child had made, with the help of her teacher, first a hat



and then a fan, and Miss Thayer had already seen that she was inclined to repeat things in the exact order in which they were first learned. To test her knowledge of the word, therefore, she again called for a hat,—and again the little girl modelled a hat. Then her teacher spelled f-a-n; and Willie made this also, after a little hesitation. She was not asked to make it again; but having made two hats, she seemed inclined to make two fans. Four days later her teacher's diary records that she spelled the three words. Two days later she was given a lesson in the actual use of language. She dressed herself for a walk, putting on everything except her hat, which her teacher had put out of her reach, so that she might ask for it in finger speech. This she did not seem inclined to do, and even sought to avoid it by pretending to be sick, by wanting water, and other things. But her teacher persevered, and at last, finding that her pretences were of no avail, the child yielded and tried to spell *hat*. The next day she was observed spelling the word in her own hand. Three days later she was taught the words *bread* and *water*, and was again seen spelling words in her hand. Thus in less than two weeks from her first lesson the little girl was beginning to talk to herself by the manual alphabet. In the mean time she had made the acquaintance of Edith, the older blind deaf-mute; and their acquaintance was a peculiarly touching one. Edith, comprehending that Willie's condition was like her own, began to help teaching her as she herself had learned; and it was in part due to Edith's child-help with Willie in the gymnastic exercises that the smaller girl began to be amenable to these lessons. Eighteen days after Willie took her first lesson she voluntarily asked for something for the first time, placing her mug before her teacher and spelling w-a-t-e-r.

In a month Willie had learned twelve words, and three weeks later had a vocabulary of eighty words. In March following her first lesson in the last of December, she asked in finger speech for a mug of cold water, instead of folding her arms and beating them savagely

The Botany Lesson

Alma and Eda two
little girls are sitting
by the window look-
ing at the flower
Alma is a cripple
like Charlie a boy
in Texas Eda is
Alma's sister and
she likes to go to
school and tells
Alma about flower-
ers and Eda told
Alma that the
stem of a leaf has
another name, it is
called the petiole
The tiny leaves at
the end of the petiole
are called stipules
Eda learned to call
the parts of the flower
by their names
Corolla means crown
Calyx means cup. The
botany is over
Willie B. Robn

upon her breast, which had been her only means of asking for water three months previous; and having been taught to say, "Please may Willie go to Boston?" she of her own accord said, "Please may Willie have a handkerchief?" In nine months she knew and used correctly four hundred words, un-

derstood questions asked of her, and often voluntarily asked questions of others.

The successive stages and continual progression in the education of this child are most interesting. She is a beautiful, golden-haired little lassie, whose voice,

ness have been comparatively few and of short duration. During the past two years she has made long strides, and has become so familiar with all the parts of speech that she not only comprehends them thoroughly, but uses them intelli-

I want to say something to you myself
I cannot speak very well yet, but my
heart is full of thoughts and I must
express some of them. Kindness is like
rain in April; it makes everything grow.
Your kindness will make the little plant-
lets here grow and blossom. Think! how
happy we shall all be when Tommy's
mind bursts beautiful and bright from be-
hind the clouds that hide it now! Loving
thoughts for others are the most fragrant
blossoms of the heart— their perfume may
so fill with sweetness and joy the life of a
blind and deaf and dumb child that he will
never dream how full the world is of
wonderful things which are hidden from
him. Life is beautiful and sweet when
we have that beautiful key, language,
to unlock its precious secrets. So, help
us educate Tommy. Help us bring light
and gladness into his life, and into
the lives of all little blind children.

HELEN KELLAR'S SPONTANEOUS APPEAL FOR TOMMY STRINGER
AT THE ANNUAL KINDERGARTEN RECEPTION, 1893.

SPOKEN BY HERSELF AND AFTERWARD WRITTEN OUT.

now that she uses it in articulate speech, is so natural that it seems difficult to believe she cannot hear the voice of those about her. Her affectional nature began to develop early in her life at the Kindergarten. Her mother had wisely perceived in her own home the importance of discipline for the unfortunate child; and although on a few occasions during the first months of her school life she displayed, with her primitive means of expression, considerable passion, when thwarted in her desires, her fits of naughti-

ness have been comparatively few and of short duration. During the past two years she has made long strides, and has become so familiar with all the parts of speech that she not only comprehends them thoroughly, but uses them intelligently. She converses now with astonishing rapidity, both with the manual alphabet and with articulate speech. A fair idea of her handwriting and use of words may be obtained from the fac-simile of one of her little compositions accompanying this article. Mr. Anagnos says that so far as originality in its true sense is concerned, Willie has no equal in the other blind and deaf people who have come under his observation. Every care is taken to aid the germination of the fine qualities in the lovely nature of the child, and to nip in the bud any tendencies toward vanity and frivolity which may accidentally be fostered in her. The influences about the children in the Kindergarten all tend to keep them simple and natural in manners and thoughts, and to make them happy, sensible and healthy, in body, mind and soul.

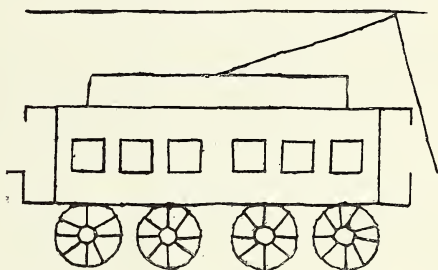
Willie's vacation life is a source of the keenest interest to those whom she visits. Once since she came north she has visited her parents in Texas, her teacher accompanying her. Last summer, as at previous times, she was the guest of devoted friends who live in Hingham, whom she has met since she came to the Kindergarten. It was while visiting them two years ago that she made one of her inimitably comical observations upon her self-conducted studies in natural history. Anent caudal appendages, she had discovered all by herself that cats differ from dogs in their manner of waving their tails. "Cats' tails," Willie announced off-hand one

day to Mr. Anagnos, who was visiting her, "go up and down,"—waving her hand gently down, up, down, up; "dogs' tails go from left to right,"—making similar motions with her hand. How many seeing children have discovered this difference? Willie has an unflagging interest in nature study, especially zoölogy. "The pleasure of having such a creature as the stuffed baby tiger for manipulation," we read in the last annual report, which contains a great fund of interesting observations upon Willie, Tommy and the others, "or of being regaled with the story of a mountain lion while Miss Johnson is telling it to the rest of the girls, she considers entrancing. Her eager questions manifest attention and understanding, and her earnest lit-up face is beautiful to see. The expressive beauty of the child's face is brought out much more strikingly, however, when she is sharing a conversation on higher themes, wherein, for instance, questions of love or duty awaken her thought. There is a sacred fascination in watching the play of mind and soul upon her mobile features. Each delicate fleeting change can be traced, and the deeper impress of noble feelings plainly seen. The world might then be challenged to show a sweeter sight." Willie's imagination is very vivid. Miss Emilie Poulsson, one of the graduates of the Perkins school of teachers, and a woman of rare culture, one who has been a warm friend of Willie, writing of her observations made from long and close acquaintance with the child, says: "The magic light of her imagination plays over everything that she does."

It has been mistakenly said that Willie is being kept in ignorance of God and all that pertains to religion, in order to test the point whether the human soul has an innate consciousness of a Supreme Being and will of itself develop a conception of God and of its relations to him. "Even if such were the intention," says Mr. Anagnos, "it would not be possible to carry out such an experiment; nor is it attempted. But the mind of a child so peculiarly shut in from infancy can for a long time afford but

the slightest and most incongruous material out of which to form ideas upon subjects which engage the best intellects. The object is therefore first to develop her mind, to teach her to think for herself and to study the causes of things, but to refrain from inculcating any creed or form of doctrinal belief until her intellectual training is sufficiently advanced to afford her some basis for personal conviction; in short, to allow her the time, opportunity and material with which to form her own belief, instead of thrusting upon her the ready-made doctrines of any sect or individual."

The deeds and needs of the Kindergarten for the Blind deserve several volumes, for they concern not an individual alone, nor a class, nor even a community, but are the corner-stone in a system which at close range shows it to be working



A BLIND BOY'S IDEA OF AN ELECTRIC CAR.

wonders; and in perspective it is seen to concern itself intimately with one phase of the great sociological problem of the times.

The Kindergarten for the Blind holds a unique and most important position among the educational institutions of the world; and if we wish to give it the fullest and freest scope to "let its deeds be witness to its worth," it must have appreciation as well as money. It needs both in large measure.

The sightless little ones at the Kindergarten for the Blind are a benediction upon the lives of those who have helped to place them there; but there are others knocking at its closed doors, closed to them because every available inch of space is occupied. The infant institution just at the beginning of its power

is harassed and cramped for money. "What has been accomplished at the Kindergarten is but a small part of what

remains to be achieved," says Mr. Anagnos. The Christmas time is a fitting time for us to think about it.

